

Documents on Diplomacy: Resources

Section V: *The Civil War and the Later 19th Century* Diplomatic Terms & Historical Events

Diplomatic & Governmental Terms

Alliance A formal pact or agreement between nations, especially for the purpose of supporting each other against military threats from other nations, or in times of war.

Ally The term used to describe a nation which has entered into an agreement or treaty with another nation for the purposes of mutual support.

Ambassador The official representative from one country to another. An Ambassador is the highest ranking official assigned to live in a foreign country for an extended period of time. In the United States, an Ambassador is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The title of Ambassador was first used in the United States in 1893. Prior to that, the highest ranking American diplomats were Ministers Plenipotentiary.

Anarchy A situation where there is no organization or control; especially in a society where there is no effective government.

Appeal A situation in which people are asked to give money, information, or help.

Belligerent States Nations which are in a recognized state of war.

Blockade An official action designed to prevent people or goods from moving from one place to another. A war measure that isolates some area of importance to the enemy.

Cabinet Department A department of the Executive Branch of the Federal Government. Each department is headed by one of the President's top advisors, known as the Cabinet. The Department of State is the oldest Cabinet Department.

Cede: To give something to someone else, such as territorial control, often unwillingly or being forced to do so.

Cession An old spelling of "secession." The act of becoming independent of a country or a government.

Chargé d'Affaires The member of a diplomatic mission who takes charge of an embassy or legation during the temporary absence of its head. The chargé may also be the diplomat who acts as head of a country's lowest-level diplomatic mission that is neither an embassy nor a legation.

Commission A group of representatives or diplomats who are given authority to accomplish a specific task.

Constitution The document written by the Constitutional Convention in 1787 that defines the fundamental principles, laws, structure, functions, and limits of the Federal Government of the United States. It was ratified in 1788 and has been amended just 27 times.

Consul An official appointed by a government to protect its commercial interests and help its citizens in a foreign city.

Convention A synonym for a treaty, used most often for multi-lateral agreements of general interest.

De Facto a Latin phrase that means something which exists in fact, although not necessarily legal or accepted.

Diplomacy The term is used to describe the practice of conducting relations with other nations, such as negotiating treaties, alliances, or agreements.

Diplomat An individual who is appointed by a government to represent its interests and to conduct its relations with another government. An Ambassador is the highest ranking U.S. Department of State diplomatic representative to another nation.

Diplomatic Corps Those engaged in on-going or specific official diplomatic efforts. Included are the Secretary of State, ambassadors, and special envoys to other nations and their staff members who support the work of diplomacy.

Diplomatic Mission An individual or group sent by a government to conduct negotiations or establish relations with another country. A diplomatic mission can be temporary or permanent.

Dispatches Official messages sent with speed between a government and its overseas diplomats or between nations.

Emancipation The process of giving people social or political rights.

Embassy The official headquarters of a government's Ambassador and other representatives to another country. It is usually located in the capitol of the other country. An Embassy is the highest level of diplomatic representation.

Embargo An official ban by a government preventing trade with another country. An order of a state forbidding ships to enter or leave its ports.

Encumbrance To weight someone down or make it difficult for a person to do something.

Envoy An agent sent by a government or ruler to transact diplomatic business.

Expansionism Increasing the amount of land controlled or governed by a country.

Extradition The practice of making someone return to a country (in which they have been accused of doing something illegal) for trial.

Faction A group within a larger group that has different views or ideas from the majority.

Fraternize To meet someone socially who belongs to an opposing group, army, or nation.

Foreign Policy The official views and policies of a government regarding its relations with other nations. In the United States, foreign policy is developed by the President, with the advice of the Secretary of State and others, and is implemented by the Department of State and any other officials designated by the President.

Insurgents Someone who is fighting against the government in their own country.

Intervention To become involved in a situation in order to improve it or to prevent it from getting worse.

Legation A diplomatic mission headed by a Minister whose title was "Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary." A legation is the second level of diplomatic representation and is less important than an embassy.

Mediation To talk to separate groups involved in a dispute in an attempt to help them end their disagreement or find a solution to a dispute.

Minister Plenipotentiary A diplomat with the authority to represent a head of state but of a lower status than an Ambassador. Until 1893, diplomats who headed American missions overseas only carried the title of Minister Plenipotentiary. The complete title is "Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary."

Negotiate The term refers to discussions between individuals, groups, or nations that are conducted for the purpose of arriving at an agreement on a particular set of terms or actions.

Neutrality A position taken by a government that favors neither side, especially in war. A formal declaration of neutrality might, however, recognize the legitimacy of both sides in the conflict. This may be unwelcome in cases of civil war or rebellion and considered interference in a country's internal affairs.

Policy statement An official pronouncement of government policy.

Protocol The system of rules and acceptable behavior used at official ceremonies and occasions. This may also refer to an official international agreement.

Rebellion An attempt to remove a government or a leader by force.

Recognition Formal acknowledgement of a government's legitimate control over its people. Two nations must formally recognize each other before they exchange diplomatic representatives.

Resistance Opposition to someone or something, especially a political or military opponent.

Revolution The overthrow of one government and its replacement by another.

Revolt An attempt to remove the government of a country by its some of its citizens, using force.

Sovereignty The authority of a state to govern itself.

Statesman An experienced politician, who is respected for making good decisions.

Treaty A formal agreement between two or more countries or states, as in reference to terms of peace or trade and any limitations associated within the agreement.

Unilateral Involving only one group or country.

Important Places, Concepts, and Events

American Red Cross A non-partisan, humanitarian organization providing disaster assistance relief and medical aid during crises. Clara Barton founded the organization in the United States in 1881.

Confederate States Those states in the southern United States that left the Union in 1861 over the issues of states' rights and slavery. They existed as the "Confederate States of America," until defeated by Union forces in 1865.

First Geneva Convention One of the four international agreements that set standards for the protection of victims of armed conflicts. It was first adopted in 1864 at the urging of the Red Cross.

International Committee of the Red Cross A private humanitarian institution founded in Geneva, Switzerland in 1863. Under international humanitarian law, it has a unique authority to protect the life and dignity of the victims of international and armed conflict.

Monroe Doctrine A policy of the United States Government forbidding European states to colonize or interfere with the countries of the Americas, first articulated in 1823. President Monroe said that any attempt to do so would be met with force.

"Obedient Servant" A complimentary closing at the end of letters during the 18th and 19th century.

Public Man An individual who takes part in civil society, most often in government or politics. One who conducts the business of the public.

Red Crescent The Red Crescent is the face of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in the Islamic world, using the crescent symbol of Islam.

Red Cross The Red Cross is the face of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in the Western world, using the cross of Christianity.

Red Crystal The Red Crystal is a non-religious symbol of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.